

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel all claims (except amended Claim 1) without prejudice; and please further amend the amended Claim 1 as filed: 9/16/06 as follows:

1. (currently Amended) A multiple-fold umbrella shaft comprising:
a plurality of hollow cylindrical tubes gradually increasing tube diameter from an innermost tube to an outermost tube, and telescopically engageable with one another about a longitudinal axis of a central shaft; each said tube having a plurality of reinforcing ribs longitudinally formed, evenly distributed and radially recessed inwardly in a cylindrical tubular surface of each said tube, with any two neighboring reinforcing ribs defining an equal central angle about the longitudinal axis of the central shaft; whereby upon assembling of the plurality of said tubes to form a multiple-fold umbrella shaft, an inner tube has a plurality of said reinforcing ribs slidably engaged with a plurality of said reinforcing ribs of an outer tube disposed around said inner tube for preventing from twisting or vibration of the tubes of the central shaft;
said reinforcing ribs of said tubes having centers of ~~the~~ a plurality of curvature radii of said reinforcing ribs radially aligned to be a radial line which is radially aligned with a longitudinal axis of the central shaft; said longitudinal axis longitudinally aligned with all centers of the tubes; and
the improvement which comprises:
said inner tube and said outer tube defining a tiny annular

aperture homogeneously in between the two neighboring tubes having ~~the~~ each said reinforcing ~~ribs~~ rib of the inner tube slidably engaged with ~~the~~ each said reinforcing ~~ribs~~ rib of the outer tube to prevent from frictional contacting between the two neighboring tubes to enhance a smooth sliding movement of the tubes when folding or unfolding the tubes for closing or opening the umbrella.

2. ~ 12. (canceled)